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ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

For the Year 1939



# CORBY URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

## Annual Report by Thomas O. Garland, M.A. M.D., D.P.H., Medical Officer of Health

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75 LONDON ROAD,  
KETTERING.

*To the Chairman and Members  
of the Urban District Council.*

*August, 1940.*

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

This is the first annual report of the Medical Officer of Health for Corby. Unfortunately it is issued in war-time and therefore for reasons of economy must be shorter than is desirable in a first review of matters affecting the public health of a new Urban District.

History is dependent mainly upon changes in methods of production. Corby gives us a delightful illustration, in a compact form, of history being made in this way.

The Corby of 1801, at the time of the first census, had a population of 611. At the end of the 19th century, with the extension at that time of the iron-stone quarries and iron-smelting furnaces, there was a marked jump in the population to over 1,000. In the next 30 years this figure only increased by approximately 500, the figure in 1931 being 1,596. In the following five years there occurred a change in the methods of producing steel from the neighbouring iron-ore fields. The population which had risen by only 500 in the previous 30 years now increased by 10,000 in the next five or six years. With the greatly increased number of people living closely together there was a great increase in the amenities they produced for one another. We see, therefore, big developments in many ways, especially in Corby's water, sewerage and housing schemes.

With the increased population, however, there is also a potential increase in the dangers that may arise from inadequate control of sanitation, food production, housing facilities, etc. The public health department aims at keeping the population healthy by exercising control over certain aspects of the environment. In attempting this we may clash with other forces seeking to control the community. The net result, for better or for worse, is that the scope of public health work often appears limited in its application compared to what might be deemed necessary in the light of modern knowledge.

There follows in this report an outline of the public health activities in this urban district with a few historical notes on their development. Certain services for the town, such as the Child and Maternity Welfare

service, the ante-natal service, the School Medical service and the Tuberculosis service are administered entirely by the County Council. Matters such as sanitation, housing, water supply, control of nuisances, application of the Food and Drugs Act are administered by the Urban District Council.

A development that might well be desirable in the future would be rather more control than is at present exercised over the air we breathe. Much work has recently been done in some places on smoke abatement for instance. At some date in the future also more attention might well be given to the health hazards of the working population during their actual working hours. These are many and without doubt there will be big developments before long in industrial medicine and factory hygiene. It would be unfortunate if these developments were to be kept entirely separate from general public health activities.

Finally, I desire to express to the Chairman and Members of the Public Health Committee, to which I am responsible, my appreciation of their interest and help. Also, I would like to thank my fellow officials for their assistance in my work for this Committee.

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

T. O. GARLAND,  
Medical Officer of Health.

## SECTION A.

### VITAL STATISTICS.

A very large proportion of the male population of Corby are now occupied in the iron and steel works of Messrs. Stewarts and Lloyds, and the firms associated with them. Iron-stone working has been an occupation of Corby men from Saxon times. There was a break during the early days of the Norman Conquest partly to stop the destruction of the forests that was necessary to supply the charcoal, the Norman lords preferring to have the forests for hunting. Economic needs are unlikely to have allowed this situation to have remained for long. Other industries that have been or are concerned with Corby are farming, brick-making, stone masonry, pottery, lace-making and manufacture of clothing.

Since the first census in 1801 the population has varied as follows :

<i>Year</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Population</i>
1801	611	1881	758
1811	627	1891	845
1821	707	1901	1,022
1831	684	1911	1,356
1841	791	1921	1,449
1851	860	1931	1,596
1861	794	1939	11,500 (approx.)
1871	699*		

During 1939 births numbered 246 and deaths 62.

### CAUSES OF DEATH.

As is usual the highest number of deaths was from heart disease and other circulatory diseases. These number 13. There were 6 deaths from Cancer. Among other causes of death there were 6 from violence, all of them accidental. There were no maternal deaths, but there were 10 deaths of children under 1 year of age.

## SECTION B.

### GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES

The Medical Officer of Health acts in a similar capacity for Burton Latimer, Desborough and Rothwell Urban and Kettering Rural Districts and is, in addition, Assistant County Medical Officer.

The first Sanitary Inspector to be appointed by the Urban District Council is Mr. C. Marsden, and the first Surveyor is Mr. Greaves. Both have offices in the Jamb.

#### (a) LABORATORY FACILITIES.

There is now a branch of the Emergency Public Health Laboratory at the Isolation Hospital, Groby Road, Leicester, under Dr. Knox.

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\*Beanfield Lawns formerly part of Parish of Corby constituted separate Parish in 1863.

(b) AMBULANCE FACILITIES.

At the moment Corby has no ambulance of its own. The Council is now taking steps to remedy this situation for the need is clearly an urgent one. At present the Weldon ambulance, under the efficient administration of the St. John's Ambulance Brigade, is called into use for non-infectious and accident cases. When an ambulance is needed at the steel works, Messrs. Stewarts and Lloyds provide their own.

(c) NURSING IN THE HOME.

*General.* The Corby Nursing Association affiliated to the County Nursing Association provides a nursing service for general cases.

*Infectious Diseases.* The services of a special nurse in certain specified cases of infectious disease are available under arrangements made between the Local and County Nursing Association and the County Council.

(d) TREATMENT CENTRES AND CLINICS.

Persons suffering from venereal diseases are treated at Northampton General Hospital. The times of attendance are :—

Males	..	Wednesday at 2 p.m.
		Friday at 7 p.m.
Females	..	Monday at 12 noon.
		Friday at 12 noon.

The County Council is the Authority for the treatment of Tuberculosis and the Tuberculosis Officer attends each Friday morning at the Health Clinic, Market Street, Kettering, at 10 a.m.

An Orthopædic clinic is held at Corby in the School Clinic on the 1st and 4th Mondays each month, on the 1st at 11 a.m. and on the 4th at 2.30 p.m.

Under the County Maternity and Child Welfare Scheme a Child Welfare Clinic is held in Corby on every Thursday at 2 p.m. at the School Clinic.

A contraceptive clinic is conducted by Dr. Mary Hendrie at the Infant Welfare Centre, Eyechurch Lane, Northampton, on the third and fourth Saturdays in each month at 2 p.m. Appointments can be made for the attendance of suitable cases on application to the Medical Officer of Health or to Health Visitors.

(e) HOSPITALS.

The following hospitals are available for inhabitants of Corby :—

Kettering and District General Hospital.  
Northampton General Hospital.  
Kettering Infectious Diseases Joint Hospital.  
London Road Hospital, Kettering.  
Rushden House Sanatorium.  
Manfield Orthopædic Hospital.



## SECTION C.

### SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

(1) WATER. Thirty years ago the water supply for Corby, like that of most of the neighbouring villages to-day, was from springs and shallow wells. Evidently this system was giving rise to difficulties. With a population of more than a few hundreds such difficulties were bound to occur, but efforts to deal with the situation were prolonged over a number of years. The following are extracts from the annual reports of the sanitary inspector of the Kettering Rural District :

1907. A scheme is required for a proper water supply and drainage for this village (Corby). The brook continually requires cleansing.

1911. The Culverts in this Parish (Corby) have been regularly cleansed and the general sanitary matters are being watched pending the execution of the proposed sewerage and water scheme.

1914. The Local Government Board held an inquiry on July 21st, 1914, *re* the new proposed water supply for Corby. The scheme, which entailed the bringing of water to the Parish from Little Oakley from a spring nearly two miles away, was opposed by many of the parishioners, who contended that a good and sufficient supply could be obtained from an old brickyard, only a few hundred yards away.

Eventually, in February, 1923, a permanent well was completed in Kelvin Grove. This was sunk 67 feet into the Northampton Sand (Ironstone) and had a heading from it 30 feet long. It was connected to a reservoir opposite Occupation Road, capable of holding 50,000 gallons.

Following the decision to develop the ironstone and steelmaking industry at Corby, a report was submitted to the Rural District Council on February 16th, 1933, dealing with the water situation in light of the increase in population that was likely to ensue. Talking of the existing well this report states : " it gives an ample supply for your present needs, which are only about 20,000 gallons per day . . . . Much larger quantities than are being taken at present can be obtained and we are of opinion that the well should be sufficient for a number of years at least and possibly indefinitely."

It was considered that a new tower was needed to give sufficient pressure for the new housing estates and one was built at the top of Occupation Road to hold 120,000 gallons. By the end of 1935, however, the water supply situation was causing anxiety and a new well was purchased and sunk at Little Oakley. A balancing water tower to hold 80,000 gallons was built at Stanion Road and completed in 1936.

A report from the water engineer dated May 4th, 1936, calculated that on a consumption basis of 20 gallons per head it would be advisable to assume that the quantity of 200,000 gallons per day would be

required by 1940. Actually by 1940, not only was the total daily consumption far above this level, but the consumption per head per day is nearer 30 gallons than 20 gallons.

A review of the present position, therefore, shows Corby to be supplied from two wells. One at Kelvin Grove, Corby, and one at Little Oakley. The water is very hard, but pure and modern chlorination apparatus is installed at both pumping stations, so that we can feel quite happy as to the safety of drinking this water. However, its hardness has serious disadvantages and the quantity that can be made available in the summer months from these sources is definitely insufficient for the needs of Corby.

Once more, therefore, the question of how to provide a further supply of safe drinking water of a reasonable hardness and readily accessible is an urgent one.

(2) DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE. This service is closely linked with that of the water supply. It is the pollution of neighbouring streams and wells that often forces better sewerage systems and better sewerage systems are impossible without good water supplies.

Prior to 1913 such drains as existed ran into the neighbouring brooks. In that year sewerage works were installed to deal with a population of 1,400. The site of these works is inside the south-east boundary of the town. Reconstruction of these original works in 1934 cost £13,250, and it was calculated they could deal with a population of 5,000 and a daily flow of 120,000 gallons. In a report on May 7th, 1936, the engineers said that this volume was already largely exceeded.

Further extensions to these works, therefore, were carried out in 1938 and 1939. They now afford facilities for dealing with a population far in excess of our present numbers.

(3) RIVERS AND STREAMS. There are two brooks that run through Corby, commonly known as the North and South Brooks, indicating their positions. Both assist in draining the storm water of the area, the north brook taking most of it, but the south brook takes the effluent from the sewerage works.

(4) CLOSET ACCOMMODATION. With the exception of a few agricultural cottages, all closets within the Urban District are on the water carriage system.

(5) PUBLIC CLEANSING. The collection of refuse is carried out by the Local Authority over the whole district. House refuse is collected weekly from the dwelling houses and trade refuse is removed from business and trade premises at a small charge.

(6) SANITARY INSPECTIONS OF THE AREA.

General Inspections (Under Public Health Acts)	3309
Nuisances abated and repairs carried out	.. 91

(7) SHOPS. Thirty-one shops were inspected during the year. Six contraventions were found and remedied.



(8) CAMPING SITES. There are two sites at present used for camping purposes. No licences were issued and steps are being taken to prevent their use for this purpose in the future.

(9) RATS AND MICE (DESTRUCTION) ACT, 1919. As a matter of routine inspections were made throughout the year, but in no instance was it found necessary to institute proceedings.

Rats and mice are becoming something of a menace. The majority of infestations are due to unsuitable sheds and accumulations of rubbish, notably at the back of shops. The responsibility for clearing rats is upon the owner of the property. The sanitary inspector is always willing to help and advise and has gassing apparatus available for rat destruction.

#### (10) FACTORIES, WORKSHOPS AND WORK PLACES

##### *Visits and Inspections*

Factories (with mechanical power) ..	15
„ (without mechanical power) ..	4
Other Premises .. .. .	19

Three contraventions were found and abated.

## SECTION D.

### HOUSING

The houses in the old village of Corby are mainly of Weldon stone, like those in the neighbouring villages. To meet the general housing shortage that followed the last world war the Kettering Rural District Council erected 34 houses under the 1919 Housing Act on the Oakley and Weldon Roads. These were completed in the years 1920-21. A further 50 houses were erected on Station Road and South Road under the 1924 Housing Act. Twenty-four of these were completed in 1927, 6 in 1928, 12 in 1932, and 8 in 1933.

The government housing subsidies were withdrawn about the time the big extension to Corby housing was needed. Most of the recent development in housing, therefore, has been under the direction of Messrs. Stewarts and Lloyds. It has taken place mainly to the north and north-west of the site of the iron and steel works. Some 2,151 houses have been built by this company for their workers on various estates. Details of these are given below.

<i>Housing Estate No.</i>	<i>Names of Streets</i>	<i>Total Number of houses</i>	<i>Date of Completion</i>
1	Bessemer Grove	.. 34	
2	Kelvin Grove	.. 74	
3	Stephenson Way		
	Faraday Grove		
	Parsons Grove		
	Gilchrist Avenue		
	Telfords Lane		
	Franklin Fields		
	James Watt Avenue		
			In Nos. 1, 2 and 3 approximately 172 houses in 1933-34.

<i>Housing Estate No.</i>	<i>Names of Streets</i>	<i>Total Number of houses</i>	<i>Date of Completion</i>
3	The Octagon Newton Grove Whitworth Avenue Pen Green Lane Rockingham Road Nasmith Avenue	.. 671	
4	Westfields Road Occupation Road Tanfields Grove Netherfield Grove Woodfield Grove Shrubfield Grove Upperfield Grove	.. 323	Approximately 830 houses, 1934-35.
5	Deene Close Thoroughsale Road Fineshade Grove Thoroughsale Grove Lodge Green Road Hazelwood Road Occupation Road	.. 231	1935-36.
6	West Glebe Road Highfield Grove Springfield Grove Occupation Road	.. 173	1936-37.
7	Studfall Avenue Sarrington Road Sarrington Close Gray's Close Ollis Close Willetts Close Tanfields Grove Thoroughsale Road	.. 320	1937-38.
8	Latimer Road Rowlett Road Rowlett Close Clifton Square Tanfields Grove	.. 210	1937-38.
9	Latimer Road Latimer Close Rowlett Road Clarke Road	.. 115	1938-40.

*The same road appears in certain instances in more than one estate. This means that certain houses in that road were built at a different period to the others.*

During the years 1933-40 that these houses were being built a number of buildings were also erected by private enterprise. They comprise approximately 200 houses, 50 flats and 50 new shops. There have been other buildings erected such as Churches, a cinema, Sunday schools, a welfare club, a workmen's hostel, a monotechnic institute, a women's hall, new schools and a school clinic, a post office, a police station, and a church army hostel.

The houses erected by Messrs. Stewarts and Lloyds and the council houses are good houses, notably in respect of spacing and provision of amenities for washing and cooking, but many of the old stone houses in Corby fall far short of standards which to-day are considered necessary for a house to be reasonably fit for human habitation. It is much to be hoped that when the war is over a clearance will be made of this property and better houses be put up to replace them.

In spite of the large number of new houses built in Corby it is still fair to say that there is a considerable housing shortage and a survey of overcrowding in October, 1939, resulted as follows :—

Among 2,720 inhabited dwellings within the Urban District 115 were overcrowded, involving a total of 1,003 persons, i.e., over nine per cent. of the population were living in overcrowded conditions.

Twenty-six cases of overcrowding had been abated by the end of the year involving a total of 215 persons, but owing to the shortage of houses within the Urban District, especially Council houses, great difficulty will be encountered in the abatement of the remaining eighty-nine cases.

Owing to the shortage of a large type of house in the district, the Local Authority granted temporary licences to five houses permitting them to be used by a number of persons in excess of the number legally permissible.

A report on housing matters for 1939 is given below :—

#### NUMBER OF NEW HOUSES ERECTED DURING THE YEAR.

(1) By the Local Authority .. .. .	—
(2) By other bodies or persons .. .. .	82

#### INSPECTION OF DWELLING HOUSES DURING THE YEAR.

(1) (a) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	39
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose	79
(2) (a) Number of dwelling-houses (included under subhead (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925 ..	12
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose	40
(3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation .. .. .	1
(4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found to be not in all respects reasonably fit or human habitation ..	11

Remedy of defects during the year without service of formal notices :—

Number of dwelling-houses defective and rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or its officers .. .. .	8
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No action under statutory powers was taken during the year.

## SECTION E.

### INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

#### MILK SUPPLY.

All dairy premises are regularly visited and inspected. Close attention is paid to the retailing methods of milk salesmen in Corby. Three farms are registered for the production of milk ; 13 persons are registered as retailers of milk, 6 of whom have premises within the district.

Of the 3 farmers, one is accredited, that is to say he produces milk under conditions where he gets special credit for the standard of cleanliness and the hygienic methods of production. A slight increase per gallon is allowed by the Milk Marketing Board for milk produced under such conditions. One dairyman is licensed to sell Tuberculin Tested milk. This milk is produced from cows which, by frequent testing, are held to be free from tuberculosis infection. Two dairymen sell pasteurised milk. This is milk that has been raised in temperature to something between 145° and 150° Fahrenheit and held at that temperature for at least half-an-hour before being immediately cooled to something less than 55° Fahrenheit. By this method all the bacteria that may be present in the milk and sometimes cause epidemics are killed. In particular milk treated in this way is safe-guarded from having living tubercle bacilli in it as well as organisms that may cause diphtheria, scarlet fever, typhoid, dysentery, Malta fever, etc.

Six samples of milk were forwarded to the County Laboratory during the year for testing for cleanliness. One was bad, one was moderate and the remainder were good.

**MEAT AND OTHER FOODS.** Corby, being an area where most of the shops handling foodstuffs are new, has a splendid opportunity to start a tradition for a high standard of cleanliness in this respect. Already serious lapses have crept in. It should be easy to ensure that washing facilities for all personnel handling food are available and that facilities for storing perishable foodstuffs are adequate and that a high standard of cleanliness is maintained not only in the shop fronts but in the areas behind the shops. Nothing can more quickly lead to disaster in a community than dirty handling of food.

Routine inspections of butchers' and other food shops were made during the year. Premises were found generally to be well kept.

There are two private slaughterhouses which were visited 124 times.

## SECTION F.

### INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Since October 23rd, 1939, measles and whooping cough have been added to the list of infectious diseases that must be notified.

From April 1st, 1939, to the end of the year 15 cases of infectious disease, excluding tuberculosis, were notified in Corby. They were :—

Scarlet Fever .. ..	6
Diphtheria .. ..	4
Erysipelas .. ..	2
Paratyphoid .. ..	1
Cerebro-Spinal Fever .. ..	1
Pneumonia .. ..	1

All cases, except the one case of pneumonia, were removed to hospital. The case of cerebro-spinal fever and the case of pneumonia both died.

#### TUBERCULOSIS.

During 1939, 3 male cases of pulmonary tuberculosis and 2 female cases of pulmonary and 2 female cases of non-pulmonary tuberculosis were notified. There was one death of a female pulmonary case.

The following figures show the number of cases on the Tuberculosis register at the end of 1939 :—

	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>
Pulmonary Tuberculosis ..	11	12	23
Non-pulmonary Tuberculosis	3	8	11
			—
			34
			—







